

THE CLEVELAND
MUSEUM OF ART
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July 9, 1993

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**RESIST-DYED TEXTILES OF INDIA, INDONESIA, AND CAMBODIA
Through 1994**

Some of the world's most ancient and exacting weaving and dyeing traditions are represented in twenty-one **Resist-Dyed Textiles of India, Indonesia, and Cambodia**, on view at The Cleveland Museum of Art through 1994. This exhibition from the Museum's collection shows garments, ceremonial cloths, wall hangings, and other works from the 15th and 18th-20th centuries which have no equals in textiles produced today.

These richly patterned textiles were made using tie-dye, stitch resist, ikat, batik, or mordant resist--all means of creating designs on textiles by selective dyeing of threads or woven cloth. In batik, for example, hot wax is applied to portions of the fabric to prevent them from absorbing dye; in tie-dye, string is tightly wound around areas to be left undyed; ikat is a labor-intensive method of tie-dyeing a pattern into threads before they are woven, then precisely weaving them together.

Many works on view were created for ritual occasions or privileged persons, and the stories of their imagery, techniques, and uses are often linked to centuries of international trade. Four cotton fragments are among the earliest surviving dyed textiles from India, having been traded to Egypt in the 15th century. Their floral and geometric designs were created using batik and mordant resist.

India's *patola*, made mainly in the small western state of Gujarat, are believed sacred or magical in all cultures who sought and used them. *Patola* are double ikat cloths--that is, the warp threads and the weft threads have been resist-dyed, sometimes with several colors, prior to weaving. Four striding elephants dominate the lively design of the Museum's rarest example, intended for export to Indonesian royalty; fewer than twenty such *patola* are in collections outside Indonesia.

In a *selendang* (shoulder cloth), Sumatran textile workers made stylized wing and tail figures, a geometric background, and end borders of series of triangles--all common motifs in Indonesian textiles; their weft ikat technique and silk and gold thread, however, came to them from India and China. (This *selendang* will go on exhibition at the end of October, when the Tibetan show closes.) A rare *tapis* (sarong, or skirt cloth) from a remote mountainous region in southern Sumatra has warp ikat geometric designs, traceable to Bronze Age Chinese peoples who established contact with many parts of Indonesia, juxtaposed with embroidered bands of mysterious curvilinear anthropomorphic figures, whose origins lie in activities practiced by men, such as woodcarving and headhunting.

Resist-Dyed Textiles was organized by Anne E. Wardwell, curator of textiles.

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